

Promise Neighborhood Trimble

A proposal submitted to:

**U.S. Department of Education
for
Promise Neighborhood, Planning Grant**

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Submitted by Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

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Introduction

This Promise Neighborhood Trimble proposal contains ideas created by a group of community members and professionals to make Trimble Township (Ohio) a place families want to live in and raise children. They will want to live here because they know their children are safe, cared for and supported, have a good education and are prepared to enter the workforce with 21st Century skills. Promise Neighborhood Trimble will accomplish this through: increasing the capacity of agencies already providing services, building a cradle-to-career continuum of solutions, integrating programs, and developing the local infrastructure for sustainability.

Promise Neighborhood Trimble is applying for Priority 2: Rural Communities as well as Competitive Preference Priority 4: Comprehensive Early Learning Network. The CPP 4 narrative begins the proposal. Resumes and Letters of Commitment are in the appendices.

Competitive Preference Priority 4: Comprehensive Early Learning Network

The vision for the Comprehensive Early Learning Network (CELN) is a physical community center where families can come for support. Service agencies will provide staff to work with children, mothers and fathers on location. The metaphor for this vision is a child's backpack. The child brings his/her needs to the center in the backpack such as; a need for health screening, a need for immunizations, etc. While at the center the service providers put those services back into the child's backpack as well as real food for the weekend and summers, books for early learning skill development, a safe location while mom or dad is looking up job postings or finding a place that will fix the car for not too much money. The child then has a backpack of

continuous support to nourish and sustain him/her while growing through the cradle to career continuum.

Planning to build this vision will take a considerable amount of time and effort. Kathy Redwine the current Head Start Education Coordinator will commit 40% of her time to being the CELN Coordinator. Kathy brings to this position nearly 20 years of experience to this effort. She manages and administers high quality services for the education of children birth through age 5. The program which is based in Trimble Township, promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. Through the Early Head Start program, the Born to Learn Curriculum supports healthy prenatal outcomes, enhances the development of infants and toddlers, and promotes healthy family functioning. The Head Start centers in the area have all achieved three-star rating (the highest achievement) in Ohio's Step Up to Quality, which is a voluntary quality rating system. Quality services are enhanced by using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The local curriculum and assessment is aligned to Ohio's Early Learning Standards and Head Start's Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Critical elements of the CELN and the community center include among others: educating young moms about proper nutrition for young children and while pregnant, promoting breast-feeding, mentoring young families through the critical early years, educating moms to become mentors, working with young dads to increase their skills and presence in the family, encouraging literacy from birth, and more.

Even with the quality services offered by several agencies there are still large areas of need. Some parents lack child care because they make too much to qualify for assistance but not

enough to afford it. There is a disturbingly high rate of drug use by individuals who are young parents. Some moms are in abusive relationships with partners who may not be the child's father. Transportation is always an issue in the rural community. Some medical treatments for children is available only in the nearest large city – Columbus – which is 75 miles away. Parents need help figuring out ways to access that medical care.

The CELN will bring together the schools, the health department, WIC, children's services, a medical clinic doctor, the police, parents, home providers and the Department of Job and Family Services to create a plan for the community center and its operation. Facilities are readily available. Trimble Elementary School is willing to provide space not being used to implement the school curriculum. The Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Agency is located in Trimble Township and has available space also. The task for the leaders of this planning phase is to figure out how all the services that are already available can work together to keep those backpacks full.

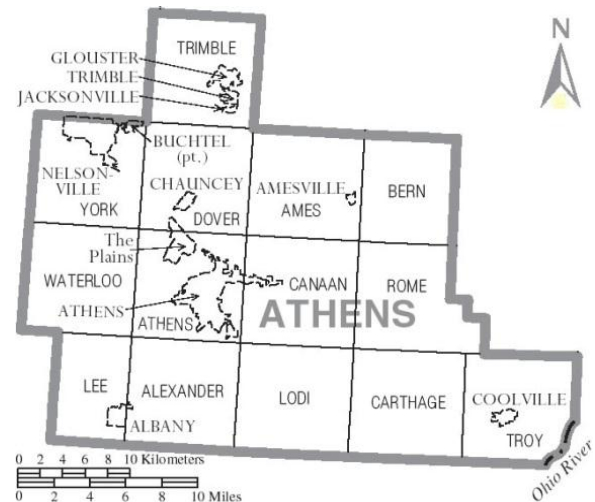
Need for a Promise Neighborhood in Trimble Township

Trimble Township, a rural area of 37.1 square miles, is the northernmost township in Athens County in the heart of Appalachian Ohio.¹ The population of Trimble Township presently stands at approximately 4,710 individuals. Geographically and culturally the area is unique and rich with pride in the Appalachian culture. Regardless of the natural beauty and deeply held values of the area, children in Trimble Township, its three villages (Glouster, Jacksonville, and Trimble) and the surrounding area, encounter a number of barriers to success.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Athens_County_Ohio_With_Municipal_and_Township_Labels.PNG

The economy of the area is generally described as depressed. A Buckingham Coal Company deep mine is located north of Glouster. The nearby mining pit was recently closed, with active operations moved to the east of Burr Oak State Park, but the loading station is still at the old site because of the location of the railroad.

The Trimble high school and middle school provide some local employment, as does a beer distributor (Miller Brands), and Frog Ranch Salsa. Some local residents commute to work in industry in Logan, Ohio, or to jobs in Athens, Ohio. Tourist activity from nearby Burr Oak State Park as well as hunting in various nearby public lands also



supports the economy to a small extent. The village owns its own electrical and water utility, although it purchases the electricity from American Electric Power and the water from the Sunday Creek Water District.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics of Villages Within Trimble Township

Statistics from Census 2000	Glouster	Jacksonville	Trimble
# of people	1,972	544	466
# of households	783	221	175
# of families	526	140	121
# of housing units	906	246	195
% of population non-white	4.25%	2.4%	1.5%
Average household size	2.52	2.46	2.66
Median income per household	\$23,929	\$24,018	\$30,500
Per capita income	\$11,837	\$13,900	\$11,437

Poverty as a Result of High Unemployment

The Township is characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and an increasingly transient population. The Township (along with Athens County as a whole) exhibits

one of the highest poverty rates in Ohio. Median household income in the Township is \$29,797.00, significantly below the statewide average. The overall poverty rate stood at 29.6% in 2010, while the poverty rate for children is continuing to move beyond 30%. Indications are this rate has risen even higher as the economic situation continues to be depressed.

The area has experienced considerable job loss, a decline in home ownership, and population out-migration over the last two decades. The employment situation in the county is dismal. According to Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the unemployment rate for Athens County as of July 2011 was 10.7%. Since most of the coal extraction industry that defined the Appalachian region for many years has left the township, and in the face of a lack of other job-creating industries, the local economy has few good paying jobs.

Athens County itself has alarming countywide indicators, as reported by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in describing the condition of poverty in the local area. In 2009, 20.6% of the population received food stamps. This was a 1.8% increase over the previous year. Of these recipients, 3,601 (28%) were children. Furthermore, in 2009:

- 61 out of every 1,000 residents in Athens County received cash benefits through Ohio Works First.
- 22.7% of County residents were enrolled in Medicaid. Of those enrolled, 59% were 17 years old or younger.

Although somewhat less is known about patterns at the township level, selected data are available that begin to paint a picture of the degree to which poverty is a salient feature of the community:

- Of the roughly 950 children enrolled in the Trimble Local Schools, approximately 67% of elementary school children and 62% of middle and high school children are eligible for free or reduced lunches, the second highest district rate in the county.
- In 2010, roughly 30% of Trimble Township children were living below the poverty level.
- In 2008, 10.7% of all Trimble Township residents had incomes below 50% of the poverty line.
- In 2008, the median value of a dwelling in Trimble Township was \$60,032. This compares to a statewide median value of \$140,200.
- Lack of local employment is evident in that employed Trimble Township residents commute an average of 31.7 minutes to work each day.
- Approximately half of all houses in Trimble Township were built prior to 1940.

This condition of poverty for many children in the Township significantly impacts child health, family stability, parental well-being, and neighborhood quality. It is also known that families and children living in poverty are at higher risk for developing lifestyle choices that highly correlate with chronic diseases and unhealthy addictions.

Medically Underserved Area

As a rural area, Trimble Township lacks many basic local social and health services. All mental health, health care specialists, and social service providers are located outside the Township, creating considerable difficulty for the many local residents who lack reliable transportation. The US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration designated Trimble Township as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA). Such shortages are at critical levels in the rural areas of the County in that most health care providers are clustered in the City of Athens, 15 miles south of Trimble. Given the severe lack

of transportation this seemingly short distance becomes nearly impossible for many to travel. For example, only one physician provides local health care. In Athens County, there is one primary care physician for every 867 individuals. Of greater concern is the lack of access to services for those who lack health care coverage. Only three pediatricians in the entire county provide services to Medicaid recipients.

A number of health and well-being indicators suggest cause for concern. In 2008, 34 out of every 1,000 children in the County were treated for serious emotional disturbances, more than double the State of Ohio rate of 16. The County's infant mortality rate stands at 9 out of 1,000 live births, compared to a statewide rate of 7.8. Childhood obesity is becoming a concern, as 21% of children in Athens County are obese. There is also an elevated prevalence of childhood diabetes in Athens County (including Trimble Township). In 2010 there were 446 reports of child abuse assigned for investigation in Athens County.

Barriers to Educational Success and Areas for Improvement

Trimble Local Schools, the public school district attended by children in the Township, has been designated as the poorest district in the State of Ohio. The district qualifies as low-achieving and is eligible to participate in the Rural and Low-Income School program. The district has few opportunities to enhance its financial position. Funding from the State of Ohio to the district has declined in recent years and there are few options for enhancing local funding. Because of the lack of business and industry in the area and the sparse number of owner-occupied dwellings, the district has little likelihood of developing support through local tax levies. Indeed, a one-mil increase in local taxes would only generate approximately \$36,000 for the district.

Trimble is a low-performing school as determined by the U.S. Department of Education through Ohio's application for School Improvement Grants. As part of the process, ODE identified the lowest achieving five percent of schools in two categories—Title I Schools in school improvement and Title I eligible secondary schools. A third category of schools, Tier 3, were identified as all Title I schools in school improvement status that are not Tier 1 or Tier 2.

Trimble Elementary School and Trimble Middle School are both Tier 3 schools.²

Trimble is eligible for the Rural and Low-income School Program authorized under Title VI, Part B of the ESEA.³ According to the U.S. Department of Education, Trimble's percentage of children from families below the poverty line is 45.37% which is the second highest proportion of the 81 school districts in Ohio in Tier 3.

Indicators of student performance in the school district suggest improvements are needed through enhanced support services and stronger connections among schools, families, and community organizations. Some key indicators include:

- The district achieved just ten out of 26 state indicators of performance during the 2009-2010 school year.
- As identified through the Ohio Department of Education in 2010, Trimble School District is in Continuous Improvement and therefore working through the School Improvement Grant process and implementing an adopted plan for school improvement.
- In a two-year period, Trimble High School graduation rates dropped from 95.2% in 2005-2006 to 83.8% in 2007-2008. This dropped Trimble's state ranking from 300 out of 610 to 578th place, placing it in the bottom 5% of Ohio's school districts. School attendance is also an issue. Although never below 90% for the past three years, when the Ohio districts

² <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=92641>

³ <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/reaprlisp/eligible11/index.html>

are ranked, Trimble is 589th out of the 610 Ohio districts. Trimble has seen a steady decline in its ranking against other Ohio schools in the past four years.

- Only 4% of the population over age 25 has a college degree. A large percentage of individuals over age 25 (26.3%) do not hold a high school diploma.

The school system is currently implementing a plan for school improvements (see Section B) that would converge with the goals of a Promise Neighborhood. Trimble school district's superintendent describes the value in a letter that can be found in the appendix.

Thus, despite innovative approaches to overcoming these multiple challenges and barriers, educational attainment remains a major concern to community members and leaders residing in Trimble Township, and has become an impetus for the Promise Neighborhood planning grant proposal.

A Community Ready for Change

Through this examination into the challenging reality of Trimble Township it becomes clear that a Promise Neighborhood has incredible potential to make significant and lasting impact in the Trimble Township community. The community has faced hardships in the past and is still facing them, some to a more dire degree. Not only is this community in need of creative solutions and coordination of services for the entire community, but it is prepared for change. This willingness, combined with a capacity for change and improvement will be described through the rest of the proposal.

While the data above are instructive, they paint a less than complete picture of the poverty and other barriers that exist for children in Trimble Township. To fill gaps in our understanding of the specific needs in Trimble Township, it will be essential to collect

comprehensive data involving community members, social service agencies, parents and families. This will be a major aim of the proposed Promise Neighborhoods planning grant.

Project Design

Preparation Activities Since January

Organization and preparation for the writing of the Promise Neighborhood planning grant proposal began in January, 2011 with several key players representing interested entities. In February a larger group was invited to become acquainted with the program. Nearly two dozen individuals attended that meeting, representing 20 different agencies, universities, colleges and organizations from the local, regional and state levels. With the interest and commitment evident, the group met monthly to discuss the focus of this project: Trimble Township's children and families.

During the months that followed, a group that averaged ten persons per meeting, comprised of community members, higher education representatives, Trimble school faculty, agency representatives and many more, met monthly to begin to grasp the need for improvement within the schools and the township. The need was amplified by the unique Appalachian cultural context of the community. Ideas resonated with those in attendance and major themes emerged. The concept of marginalization was determined to describe the Township excellently; meaning that the general community (not necessarily all residents) has been ostracized from greater society leading to few opportunities for self-sufficiency and a concomitantly high dependency on external aid. In order to combat this marginalization, the group unanimously agreed that empowering the Trimble community to make real change should be the main goal. It is the Trimble Township community members that are experts on their community and its greatest

needs. Using these concepts of marginalization and empowerment, the group further defined and planned for future solutions to its greatest needs.

Theory of Action

The mission of the Trimble Local Schools is to work together for excellence in student achievement. Because Trimble is the poorest school district in the State of Ohio, its leadership has a long history of developing innovative approaches to enhancing student achievement and well-being. Unfortunately, as a byproduct of its status as a district in a high-poverty rural area with a small tax base, the district often lacks the resources to assertively address barriers to student success. As is the case in many rural areas, the school district stands as a primary organizing structure for the community and, as such, is well positioned to facilitate the network of relationships among various support structures in the community.

The Trimble School District's improvement plan aligns with the continuum of solutions for Trimble's Promise Neighborhood through involvement of district staff leadership in the partnerships developed for this initiative. Trimble Schools will be an integral partner in the planning process, providing appropriate access to student-level data and participating in activities that result in additional data from students and family members. The school district will be the primary promoter to the school community of inter-agency cooperation within the local community.

School-linked, community-based partnerships aimed at enhancing the well-being of youth and families are being supported by the district for family-centered, culturally-responsive principles of practice. The school improvement plan adopted by the district provides strategies for increasing collaboration and communication among parents, high school teachers, extended

day providers and community service agencies. Promise Neighborhood Trimble will emphasize home-school relationships and collaboration between professionals and parents.

Figure 1 shows the commitment of the group to have Trimble Schools as the center of the project surrounded by the results that will be achieved through the project. Five of the results are from the RFP and three have been added by the planning group. This system of Family and Community Supports couples with the continuum of individual development of children as they progress from birth and early childhood through the K-12 grade levels, with identified transition points, on to college entrance and/or career success.

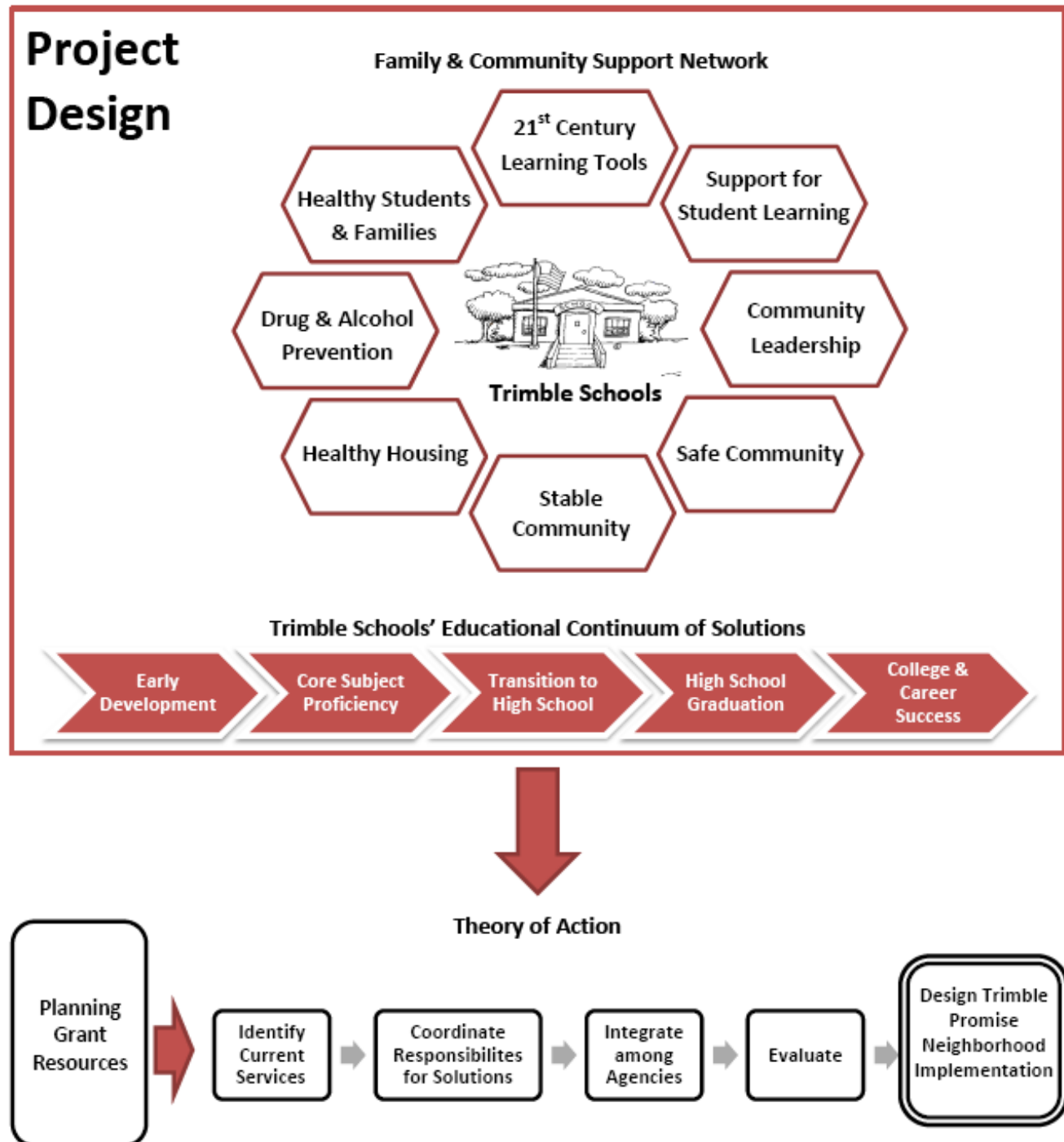
The theory of action driving the planning phase of this project starts with resources allowing for official organizing and development that identifies current services from which solutions may emerge. A system of accountability will be designed that will coordinate the responsibilities for implementing the solutions at the proper phase of the project. Two key activities that will be a foundation for success are: first, to integrate the many federal, state and local agencies that have responsibilities, resources and good intentions to operate collaboratively with as few silos of services as possible; second, to continuously evaluate activities in order to provide formative feedback to the Governing Board, the schools, and the community, allowing for continuous improvement of the process. Ultimately this theory of action will produce a plan to deliver the most effective solutions to bring about the desired results.

Current School Improvement Activities

Trimble Local School District has been working to improve the achievement of students at the middle school level through an award from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) process. Trimble has been using the monies to provide job embedded professional development to their teachers. They have hired staff for non-teaching

duties, hired consultants to work with teachers, and purchased instructional resources for the classroom.

Figure 1: Project Design and Theory of Action: Continuum of Solutions



Trimble strives to achieve a safe school environment. By 2012, Trimble Local Schools will provide a safer learning environment and promote higher expectations as measured by decreasing major discipline occurrences by ten percent and meeting or exceeding the state's graduation requirement of 90 percent. The district strategies for meeting this goal are in alignment with the Trimble Promise Neighborhood continuum of solutions to support cradle-to-career success for students. In short, Trimble Local Schools strives to provide a safe, orderly, and welcoming environment and to promote staff and student well-being so that all students have the opportunity to learn critical skills necessary to be productive and responsible citizens.

The Trimble Middle School (TMS) and Trimble Elementary School (TES) staffs have formed thirteen distinct Teacher Based Teams (TBT). These include a team for each grade level K – 8th, a Reading Team, a Math Team, a Positive Behavior Support Team, a Technology Team and a Students With Disabilities (SWD) Team. A full-time staff person who is a grade level TBT Facilitator and a SWD Coordinator assists the teams. Two other full-time staff members who assist teams are the Literacy Coach and the Math Coach. The district technology coordinator assists the Technology Team. A Central Office level staff person – the district director of data, testing and curriculum – supports all teams with current data. Team performance is monitored by collecting and organizing meeting agendas and minutes and by documenting changes in instructional practices.

Trimble elementary and middle schools have been working with the ODE Office of Transforming Schools that is charged with administering the School Improvement Grant. A transformation specialist from the state has been providing consultation to the schools to build the capacity of its schools and to engage them in inclusive, continuous, and targeted improvement in order to raise student achievement that is sustainable.

Teachers participate in professional development both during the school year and during the summer. Trimble Local Literacy Consultants have conducted a series of trainings in collaboration skills, classroom management and leadership, continuous improvement frameworks and use of data. Another topic that is addressed with focus is differentiation of instruction and co-teaching. For this, the consultants use materials from William Bender, Grace E. Smith and Carol Ann Tomlinson. Another area of professional development has been instruction in the Promethean ActivClassroom that is a product of Logical Choice Technologies. The district has for several years participated in the Ohio Improvement Process, a joint effort of the Ohio Department of Education and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators to use the principles of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council for school improvement. To this end, teams at the district, building, and classroom level regularly gather to examine data and recommend redirection of school improvement efforts.

Reading and math performance is a priority at Trimble's schools. The district currently utilizes collaboratively supported community-wide reading efforts as well as related services provided by Ohio University consistent with district goals and strategies. A 15-year partnership with Ohio University Kids on Campus, with funding from 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, has provided afterschool and summer programs for Trimble elementary students focused on tutoring in math and reading. Funding from a collaborative partnership among local foundations provided afterschool and summer programming for middle school children for the past two years.

The district is in the third year of a partnership with Ohio University's Patton College of Education and Human Services to pair graduate teaching fellows with current teachers (see further detail in Section B.3). This allows the graduate fellow to have full-time experience in a

monitored field experience and allows the teacher time to work in the building placing and mentoring student teachers and practicum students. The partnership also brings the expertise of the university directly to the school to integrate research-based programs and structures to address reducing the disparity between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Recent technology purchases that have supported this work include whiteboards, iPads and netbooks. In addition, the district has recently become a partner with the Southeast Ohio Teacher Development Collaborative, a partnership of five colleges and universities in southeast Ohio that provides professional development in specific areas to the teachers at Trimble.

The proposed continuum of solutions to achieve the desired results will fit well with the School Improvement Grant activities already started. The SIG process provides for teacher professional development within teacher learning communities. It includes strategies to partner with the community that will be emphasized to a greater extent through the proposed continuum of solutions. The Promise Neighborhood project will allow for increasing background research to investigate the most effective models of community involvement from areas all over the United States and the world. The needs assessment process will include activities that will improve community input on the types of solutions that resonate with local residents, motivating them to become involved with the change process surrounding the school and community. The desired result is that solutions integrate what teachers need with what the local needs so that the emphasis is on helping students achieve their educational and career goals.

Community Service Agencies as School Partners

Trimble relies on a network of supporting organizations because many of its students live within the context of poverty and their needs are broader than learning academic skills. Because of its lack of financial resources, Trimble Schools has a long history of close relationships with

individuals and organizations in the community. Numerous partnerships have developed over the years, benefitting the schools and the students that attend them. Thus, more than in many larger communities, school leaders have cultivated a network of relationships that will be of great value in developing a Promise Neighborhood in Trimble Township.

Several local agencies have partnered with the district to meet the social/environmental needs of the students and their families. The Athens County Children Services agency has for the past three years employed a school social worker who works entirely out of the Trimble schools, working with students at-risk of school problems and their families. The Tri-County Mental Health and Counseling Center also provides two mental health professionals and two caseworkers fulltime within the district to work with identified students and their families. For the students who may not have such extensive needs, the school employs a Parent Advisor to facilitate communication between the home and the school. Hocking College has recently placed a TriO Talent Search coordinator in the high school to provide career and college information, as well as support to students pursuing post-secondary education in a college, university or technical school. As mentioned earlier, Kids on Campus is an after-school and summer tutoring and nutrition program offered by Ohio University's College of Health Sciences and Professions that has operated a 21st Century Learning Program for the past two years. Rural Action, an agency located within Trimble Township that builds model sustainable development projects and is focused on the civic participation in Appalachian Ohio, provides student and teacher education on the Sunday Creek Watershed and the Community Foods Initiative.

As much as Trimble Local Schools has accomplished, it still is in the position of working with a large proportion of at-risk students with multiple needs when they come to the schools in kindergarten. They are coming from a community that has a high proportion of impoverished

families that have numerous needs and an appalling lack of resources. Trimble Township is known within the Athens County social service community as an area that is high need. This is why the Promise Neighborhood project will directly benefit the school district and the community.

Tomcat Bridgebuilders Building Community Assets

Tomcat Bridgebuilders is a community project that links state and local organizations and programs and encourages young people to make healthy choices regarding alcohol and drugs in Trimble Township. Its mission is to build upon and increase youth and community assets that will help the Trimble community reduce the risk of underage access and use of alcohol and other drugs. They work to strengthen families through drug and alcohol education and focus on prevention by offering healthy choices and activities to the youth of the community.

Tomcat Bridgebuilders is a team of community members who want to ensure a brighter future for the youth of Trimble Township. They are positive role models within the community and encourage volunteerism among youth and adults. Tomcat Bridgebuilders recently applied for a Drug-Free Communities Support Program Grant that would significantly increase their capacity to reduce youth access to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) while changing community norms around the use and abuse of ATOD.

One of the unique aspects to the community group is its use of media and social networking to keep members and youth knowledgeable about opportunities and events. There is an active website - <http://tomcatbridgebuilders.weebly.com/> - a listserv group, a Facebook page and even paper flyers. Events for youth coordinated with the school are announced via the phone calling tree that provides a recorded message to all students' households that have a phone number listed with the district.

Youth members of the group have written letters to health care professionals about the problem with prescription drugs in the area. The group is actively seeking funds to reinforce this effort by providing billboards, radio spots, newspaper ads, and local TV anti-drug messages. The group has recently obtained a two-year grant for the Trimble Middle School to provide coordination of afterschool activities and funded transportation for the youth to ride a school bus home afterwards.

Monthly meetings provide a forum to bring county officials into the community to answer questions and provide information to community members. During 2010 the Sheriff's Office provided training on Identity Theft Prevention. The county Prosecutor's Office provided assistance with understanding the judicial system, which often frustrates and confuses community members who want to see drug dealers prosecuted and taken off the street. Other agencies scheduled to offer training resources include the Athens County Sheriff's Office and the Ohio National Guard.

Planning for an Educational Continuum of Solutions from Cradle-to-Career

Promise Neighborhoods planning will focus on cradle-to-career solutions by leveraging university and community assets across a child's developmental trajectory and social environments. Particular attention will be given to solutions focusing on key transition points in a child's life: the transition to school, transitions to middle and high school, transition to college, and transition to career. It is the belief of the Promise Neighborhood team that these transition points reflect significant cracks through which an at-risk child can fall on the way to adulthood.

Conducting a comprehensive assessment is a core feature of the Promise Neighborhood planning grant. The planning process will build on an initial assessment process described later in this application (Section D) that will encompass much of the first half of the planning year.

The Governing Board will collate and analyze data from this assessment in developing a comprehensive plan for solutions to positively impact youth across the developmental spectrum.

Prevention strategies in preschool and the early grades will rely on promoting literacy readiness and development, particularly for children who come from homes with limited economic resources or enrichment opportunities. In addition to strong instruction in the early grades of formal schooling, there exists a vital need to promote literacy development in preschools. A nationally-commissioned report – *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) – noted that preschools and other group care settings for young children “often provide relatively impoverished language and literacy environments, in particular those available to families with limited economic resources” (p. 8). This report led to great interest in improving the quality of daycare centers, including programs like *Step up to Quality*, that provide formal daycares with the opportunity to gain different levels of certification based on their programming and staffing. Pennsylvania’s statewide Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/professional development, Assistance, Resources and Support) is a model for other communities that desire to use evidence-based recommendations from Snow et al. (1998) and make them actionable. Approaches include network support, professional development opportunities for teachers and staff, addressing issues of early childhood standards and benchmarks for normal development in stages on multiple dimensions.

Promise Neighborhoods will build on the work of Athens’ Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) to address the issues of improving the language and literacy environments for early care providers. These include efforts to:

- Engage with current providers to do an environmental scan of current services and needs in both preschool and in-home providers;

- Identify the ongoing professional development needs of providers;
- Prioritize the support and technical assistance needed to increase the effectiveness of providers; and,
- Determine how to bring in providers who are currently disengaged from the available networks.

As part of Promise Neighborhoods Trimble, the Ohio University Patton College of Education and Human Services (PCEHS) will maintain its relationship with Trimble schools using its Sponsored District Policy. A PCEHS Sponsored District is a public or chartered Appalachian Ohio school district with which the PCEHS has a special relationship. Trimble Local School District is currently benefiting from its relationship with PCEHS through services that address the issues of poverty and educational improvement by enhancing teaching and learning, including:

- One day per month of services of College faculty or staff members who can provide professional development or technical assistance to address issues that the district has identified as a need.
- The Teaching Fellows program through the Center for Partnerships. In this program, Trimble uses district funds to pay for a graduate stipend for licensed teachers to teach half-time in the district while concurrently pursuing their master's degree. The University supports this program through a graduate tuition fee remission for the credit hours of all teaching fellows. These licensed teachers assist students and teachers, especially in math and reading, by providing regular classroom and intervention services under the guidance and support of school and university personnel.

- Supplemental Educational Services (SES) provided by The Stevens Literacy Center. Plans are pending to provide free, on-site tutoring for high-poverty, at-risk students.
- The Better Math through Literacy project offered by the Teacher Education Department and the Stevens Literacy Center to improve the conceptual and pedagogical knowledge of K-3 teachers in standards-based mathematics instruction.

As discussed earlier, the transitions for students at key points in their educational journeys are important, and the previously described efforts are heavily invested in preventing the need for intervention and supplemental services for at-risk students. Positive school experiences in the middle school years are exceptionally predictive of high school graduation and future career success. A recent evaluation of a high school transition program showed teachers' and students' efficacy (i.e., their perception of themselves as responsible and capable of their success) is a strong predictor of student achievement in Ohio's 8th grade achievement tests (Newman & Salzman, 2011). The likelihood of both teachers and students being efficacious is increased through strong professional development in the former and strong instructional support for the latter. Further, a report from 2009 for the Athens County Business Education Partnership, highlighted the need to improve dropout prevention strategies in Trimble schools and potential solutions on which the Promise Neighborhoods Trimble needs assessment can build to determine the extent to which the recommendations have been instituted and the effectiveness of those efforts. By plugging potential "leaks in the pipeline" to career and college, we strive to increase successful transitions.

Planning for a Family and Community Support Network Continuum of Solutions

Promise Neighborhoods Trimble will leverage university and community assets. The Governing Board membership is well-positioned to lead the overall effort to leverage planning

year assets into broader support for the Promise Neighborhood continuum of solutions. The Governing Board includes representatives from two public social service agencies, a local school district, a public university, and a local resource/advocacy organization. This range of partner organizations provides access to a disparate range of funding and support streams. Such broad access represents one of the primary strengths of the Promise Neighborhoods Trimble initiative. The involvement of multiple partners that exist at the county and state levels also creates opportunities for connections to various educational and social service programs operated directly by the partner organizations and others with whom those organizations maintain working relationships. One or more of the various partner organizations maintain key relationships with federal and state officials that will serve to enhance the overall effort. These officials may assist in leveraging program activities into additional sources of support. Additionally, because Trimble Township stands as one of the poorest localities in the poorest area of Ohio, it is anticipated that the Promise Neighborhood effort will generate considerable interest among organizations, agencies, and providers who wish to positively impact children in this area of high need. Each of the partner organizations included on the Promise Neighborhoods Trimble Governing Board has committed to bringing its resources to the effort to leverage Promise Neighborhood activities into broader support for the overall implementation effort.

The Ohio University's College of Health Sciences and Professions will continue to provide critical afterschool and summer programming to at-risk children in the community. Kids on Campus, sponsored by the CHSP, is a rural partnership that empowers underserved, at-risk children and their families in the realization of their full potential through educational, nutritional and recreational opportunities. It serves nearly 100 elementary and middle school children in

Trimble Township through afterschool programming focusing on reading and mathematics support, homework assistance, and physical activity.

Leveraging and Coordinating Existing Assets

Trimble Township and the surrounding area have an existing network of service agencies and valuable assets. A large number of individuals representing these agencies and assets are aware of the efforts of the Trimble Promise Neighborhood planning project and have already given their time and commitment. Each of these existing agencies is currently serving or has the potential capacity to serve the residents of the community.

A Promise Neighborhood grant would better enable these valuable services and assets to be integrated and coordinated by comprehensively integrating services that currently exist in silos. This coordination effort will begin with an extensive assessment of existing services and programs that will play an integral part in planning for the best-identified solutions. A preliminary assessment of agencies, services, programs and projects has already been completed by the team. The results of this initial assessment informed the team in the creation of tentative solutions that are described in detail in the Project Services section. The team will conduct a more thorough examination to identify all existing efforts affecting the Township at the Federal, State and local levels, as well as privately funded programs, to ensuring the community is leveraging all possible resources.

Coordination among these efforts will rely on consistent and well-informed communications from the Promise Neighborhood leadership. Representatives from these existing programs will be invited to participate if such an invitation has not already been extended. In order to have successful coordination efforts and the breaking down of silos, the team will create time for communication between agencies, not only with leadership. Such inter-agency dialogue

will help to inform all participants of existing efforts, creating a well-connected service sector for the people of Trimble Township. Additionally, the team will use the result of such coordination efforts to support strong solutions through existing efforts as well as newly created initiatives designed to fill in identified service gaps.

Project Services

The Promise Neighborhoods Trimble Governing Board brings together a diverse array of experiences and programmatic foci that will contribute to a broad, comprehensive, and collaborative continuum of solutions. Included on the board are a local school district, a large public University, a local resource/advocacy organization, and two public social service agencies. Reflected among this group are members with expertise in educational programming, health services, literacy, family-level interventions, nutrition, and child development. The Governing Board and a broader advisory board also reflect considerable involvement of local community leaders who are positioned to build critical community buy-in to the Promise Neighborhood Trimble initiative. Planning will be further enhanced by the local involvement of one of the leading public universities in Ohio and various units from its Colleges of Health Sciences and Professions, Osteopathic Medicine, and Education and Human Services, as well as the School of Leadership and Public Affairs.

Needs Assessment

The first task of the planning process will be to determine actual and perceived needs by collecting information from community members and also from secondary data sources as available. The needs assessment will be overseen by the Project Director and the Project Coordinator. The various tasks of the needs assessment will be conducted by the Voinovich

School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University, aided by the research graduate assistants (GA) assigned to this project. The needs assessment will be considered to be an integrated activity of the project, therefore the GAs will be from several disciplines and the activity will be coordinated by the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator will regularly report progress and findings from the needs assessment to the Governing Board in their biweekly meetings.

There will be a compressed but robust research of the literature that will be used as a guide for this needs assessment. The project has plans for including up to four research graduate assistants. The GAs will be chosen for their skill at conducting literature reviews and community-based research. The literature reviews are needed to determine the effectiveness of potential solutions that have been proposed and the evidence that supports them from other similar projects. The project will need to focus on solutions that are evidence-based or have such community support that there is a compelling reason to implement them.

Tables 1 and 2 show the desired results of the Promise Neighborhood continuum of solutions that will lead to an excellent education for the children growing up in Trimble. The solutions listed were brainstormed through a series of meetings leading up to the writing of this proposal. Each solution needs to be more fully researched for evidence of success in existing projects. In the process of doing so it is likely that other evidence-based and effective solutions will be discovered. Tables 1 and 2 also show the available current data related to the indicators concerning Trimble Township. Table 2 includes five new indicators chosen by the project team that are focused on the unique needs of this community.

Segmentation Analysis

The segmentation analysis of collected data will allow the project planning team to better target solutions to the needs of the community as found through the needs assessment. For example, the current academic need listed in the Trimble Local Schools annual District Local Report Card is for students with disabilities to become proficient in reading and mathematics. The Local Report Card also shows that students who are economically disadvantaged already score as proficient as those who are not economically disadvantaged. The segmentation analysis will disaggregate other information on the indicators to be reviewed by the planning team so that solutions can be focused specifically on the needed areas for efficient use of resources.

There are a number of community health indicators that will be subjected to a segmentation analysis. Some of the data, such as immunization rates of children, will be collected and analyzed. Other data available at the county level will need to be worked with to extract only the Trimble Township data. Other data will be collected as part of the Needs Assessment and then subjected to a segmentation analysis. An example of this is the percentage of children in single-parent or no-parent families. An analysis will determine the proportion of children who also have disabilities or have particular health needs, such as poor nutrition, obesity, dental problems, etc.

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist will be a member of the team of staff from the Voinovich School working on this project. Certain data will be geo-coded to design informative maps of the area that show the locations where various indicators are most prevalent and least prevalent. Maps have been used for several years to communicate quickly and efficiently to participating professionals as well as to community members familiar with the area. A map can graphically represent a concept in ways that can be more efficient and insightful than

an oral presentation alone. Maps are also very good for community presentations to relate the extent of issues faced by different parts of the community to an audience.

Table 2: A Continuum of Education Results, Solutions and Indicators

Result	Tentative Solution	Related Indicator	Current Status				Data Source
Children ready for Kindergarten	Design needs assessment Promote and enhance preschool Encourage medical homes Promote Family Navigator services	—# and % of children birth to kindergarten entry who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.	No data currently available				
	Increase parents' knowledge of childhood development needs Encourage parent and community activities focused on childhood development	—# and % of three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning (as defined in this notice) as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures (as defined in this notice).	KRAL scores				ODE Data Warehouse
				07	08	09	
			OH avg TLS avg Low Med High	19.7 17.6 35% 37% 28%	20.2 16.1 41% 37% 22%	20.3 17.6 33% 45% 23%	
Access current data Collect additional data	—# & % of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool.	Data exists in paper form in student files					
Students proficient in core subjects	Enhance literacy services Coordinated individualized services to students Provide after school & summer programs Improve special education Improve gifted education	—# & % of students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and reading or language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3rd through 8th and once in high school).	Reading: 3 rd = 86% 4 th = 84% 5 th = 47% 6 th = 71% 7 th = 69% 8 th = 78% OGT=81%		Math 3 rd = 80% 4 th = 81% 5 th = 58% 6 th = 58% 7 th = 58% 8 th = 65% OGT=78%		ODE Data Warehouse 09-10 LRC
Successful MS to HS Transition	Provide mentoring and counseling services Provide mental health counseling services Further develop drug prevention activities	—Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade	Trimble Attendance rates				ODE Data Warehouse
			07-08	08-09	09-10		
			6th = 94% 7th = 94% 8th = 94% 9th = 95%	6th = 93% 7th = 94% 8th = 94% 9th = 93%	6th = 94% 7th = 94% 8th = 94% 9th = 94%		
HS Graduation	Develop guidance services for post-secondary direction Enhance literacy services Coordinated individualized services to students	—Graduation rate (as defined in this notice) The four-year adjusted cohort is the group of students starting ninth grade four years prior to the graduation date, adjusted for those who transfer in or out over that four-year period; or, the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that graduating class	Trimble Graduation rates				ODE Data Warehouse
				07-08	08-09	09-10	
			EcDis Non EcDis Trimble Ohio	81% 86% 84% 85%	88% 90% 89% 83%	NA NA 89% 83%	
College/Career Success	Provide mentoring and counseling services, including financial aid sources Develop persistence among at-risk students Offer job training resources Offer re-entry resources Continue literacy service provision	—# & % of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma, as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(iv), and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.	Trimble College going rates				OBR High School to College Transition Report
				% to college	% needing remediation		
			04-05	23%	40%		
			05-06	42%	53%		
			06-07	54%	62%		
			Educational Attainment Trimble Township: HS diploma or less = 44%				American Community Survey

Table 3: A Continuum of Family and Community Supports

Result	Tentative Solution	Related Indicator	Current Status				Data Source								
Students are healthy	Promote pediatric Care Provide health screening/wellness checks Facilitate immunization Create recreation facilities	—# & % of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily	Overweight/Obese rates-3rd gr. Athens Co=40%, Ohio=36%				Ohio Dept of Health								
			Low Birth weight Athens=8.1% Ohio=8.5% National Benchmark=6.0%				Mobilizing Action Toward Comm. Health County Health Rankings								
			Athens County ranks 77 out of 88 in Health Factors												
	Increase availability and access to healthy foods	—# & % of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily	Access to Healthy Foods Athens=33% Ohio=64% National Benchmark=90%												
	Implement mold and lead abatement resources	—# & % of children who are tested for blood lead level	Well child exam and Blood Lead Level test for children on Medicaid <table><tr><td>2007</td><td>Athens</td><td>Ohio</td></tr><tr><td>1 yr old</td><td>45%</td><td>55%</td></tr><tr><td>2 yr old</td><td>40%</td><td>47%</td></tr></table>				2007	Athens	Ohio	1 yr old	45%	55%	2 yr old	40%	47%
2007	Athens	Ohio													
1 yr old	45%	55%													
2 yr old	40%	47%													
	Promote prevention and cessation programs for families	—# & % of children who come from homes where parents are users of tobacco, illicit drugs and/or abuse alcohol													
Students feel safe	Improve neighborhood watch program Improve neighborhood lighting	—# & % of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment (as defined in this notice)	<u>Housing Unit Vacancy Rate</u> Occupied = 88% Vacant = 12%				American Community Survey								
	Create a community value system	—# & % of violent and non-violent crimes in community	No data currently available												
Students live in stable communities	Provide financial literacy for families	—Student mobility rate (as defined in this notice)		Elem	MS	HS	ODE Data Warehouse								
	Promote re-entry programming		07-08	14%	12%	11%									
	Design transportation resources		08-09	10%	9%	13%									
	Provide housing resources & weatherization		09-10	12%	14%	10%									
	Launch leadership development Create recreation facilities	—# & % of community members willing to participate in leadership development activities	<u>Income to poverty rate</u> Income below poverty = 29% Income 100%-199% of poverty = 25% Income >= 200% of poverty = 47%				2010 Ohio Family Health Survey								

Table 2 (continued) A Continuum of Family and Community Supports

Result	Tentative Solution	Related Indicator	Current Status	Data Source
Family/Community support Learning	Design a family mentoring program Develop library programming for families	—For children birth to kindergarten entry, the # and % of parents or family members who report that they read to their child three or more times a week;	Children in single parent households Athens=32% Ohio=33% National Benchmark=20%	Mobilizing Action Toward Comm Hlth County Health Rankings
	Develop library programming for families Support kinship care activities	—For children in kindergarten through the eighth grade, the # and % of parents or family members who report encouraging their child to read books outside of school	No data currently available	
	Launch leadership development activities	—For children in the ninth through twelfth grades, the # and % of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career	No data currently available	
	Increase employment opportunities in the community	—# & % of 18 to 24-year olds out-migrating from community	No data currently available	
Students with 21 st Century Learning Tools	Increase Internet availability Instruct on web navigation	—# & % of students who have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband internet (as defined in this notice) and a connected computing device	No data currently available	
	Promote productive use of social networking sites	—# & % of students who use social networking websites frequently.	No data currently available	

Longitudinal Data Management System

The project leaders will determine the elements for a longitudinal data management system for tracking the individual-level academic, family and community support indicators identified in the RFP. Individual-level data collected through surveys and made available by State and local social service agencies will be de-identified and aggregated by the subgroups listed in section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiii) of the ESEA based on ESEA guidelines and in ways that preserve confidentiality. Data from secondary sources, such as the Ohio Department of Education and the US Census Bureau are currently available for these subgroups. All data will be entered into a relational database that will enable the tracking of all performance measures over time. As monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports are generated, a reporting interface will be developed to facilitate rapid-time and on-the-fly analysis of the information. In addition, all data will be geo-referenced to enable the mapping of key performance indicators at the block group, census tract, or township level.

Data Collection Strategies

The team of researchers from the Voinovich School who will be assigned to the needs assessment are trained in all aspects of qualitative and quantitative research including survey design, deployment and analysis; interview and focus group script development; triangulation and qualitative analysis; social network analysis, and analysis of administrative, programmatic and secondary data for identifying community needs, process improvement opportunities, and program evaluation purposes.

The Governing Board and the project staff will operate based on the principles of shared responsibility and decision making. An important goal is to fully engage and empower community members and agency representatives in all phases of the project including needs

assessment, strategy development, action planning and development of the evaluation plan. This is critical in order to ensure the project accurately identifies and addresses local needs and that all components of the proposed solutions are feasible at the local level. This approach will also ensure that the project builds on existing assets and resources and does not duplicate other local efforts.

The Governing Board, Project Director and the Project Coordinator will review reports and maps on a monthly basis to ensure progress is being made and the objectives of the program achieved. In instances where the program is not achieving its intended goal, program partners will collaborate with project staff and members of the advisory board to develop and implement alternative approaches.

The results of the community needs assessment will be reviewed by the Governing Board and used to identify the key underlying factors impacting student and community success. To facilitate the identification and development of strategies that will have maximum impact, the project team will test certain solutions and performance measures for their viability and practicality within the Trimble schools and community.

Determining Solutions

Performance information on key indicators will be presented at regularly-scheduled community meetings to inform families, stakeholders and political officials about the project and encourage their engagement. Proactive communication strategies are intended to inform stakeholders and community members as well as strengthen ongoing support for the program and leverage funding. The arranged meetings to present information will be led by trained facilitators skilled at capturing the voice of the community by ensuring that everyone who has an opinion or something to add to the process has been heard. Facilitators will work with the project staff to

determine in advance objectives for each meeting and how every presentation builds onto the effort to achieve the final goal of choosing the best solutions.

Once the solutions are chosen the Governing Board will strategize activities intended to cause change that will be measured through the indicators. The cumulative change in the indicators along with a strong community involvement and support will ensure that Trimble Schools and Trimble Township will achieve the benefits of the Promise Neighborhoods Trimble program.

Management Plan

The day-to-day operations of the Promise Neighborhoods Trimble planning project will be the responsibility of the Project Director, Barry Oches, and the Project Coordinator, Dana Larsen. Resumes for both can be found in the appendix. Oches is a former elementary school principal, curriculum coordinator and special education teacher from a district adjacent to Trimble Local Schools. He has a doctorate in supervision of curriculum and instruction. For the past 11 years he has been a program evaluator at Ohio University's Voinovich School. Larsen has a master's degree in Public Administration and is working as a research associate at the Voinovich School. General job responsibilities for each are in the table below. Oches and Larsen will be assisted by four graduate students coming from the varied disciplines of social work, family studies, public administration and educational administration.

Project Director

- Leads monthly governing board meetings
- Sets timeline and benchmarks
- Oversees comprehensive needs assessment
- Develops the plan to deliver solutions
- Builds community support
- Involves community in development
- Establishes effective partnership
 - Commitment of resources
 - Buy-in to chosen solutions
- Participates in a community of practice

Project Coordinator

- Writes the IRB proposal
- Coordinates data collection
- Supports needs assessment activities
- Facilitates the partnership
 - Communication
 - Organization
- Coordinates reporting to funding agency
- Facilitates Advisory Board meetings
- Assists project director
- Participates in a community of practice

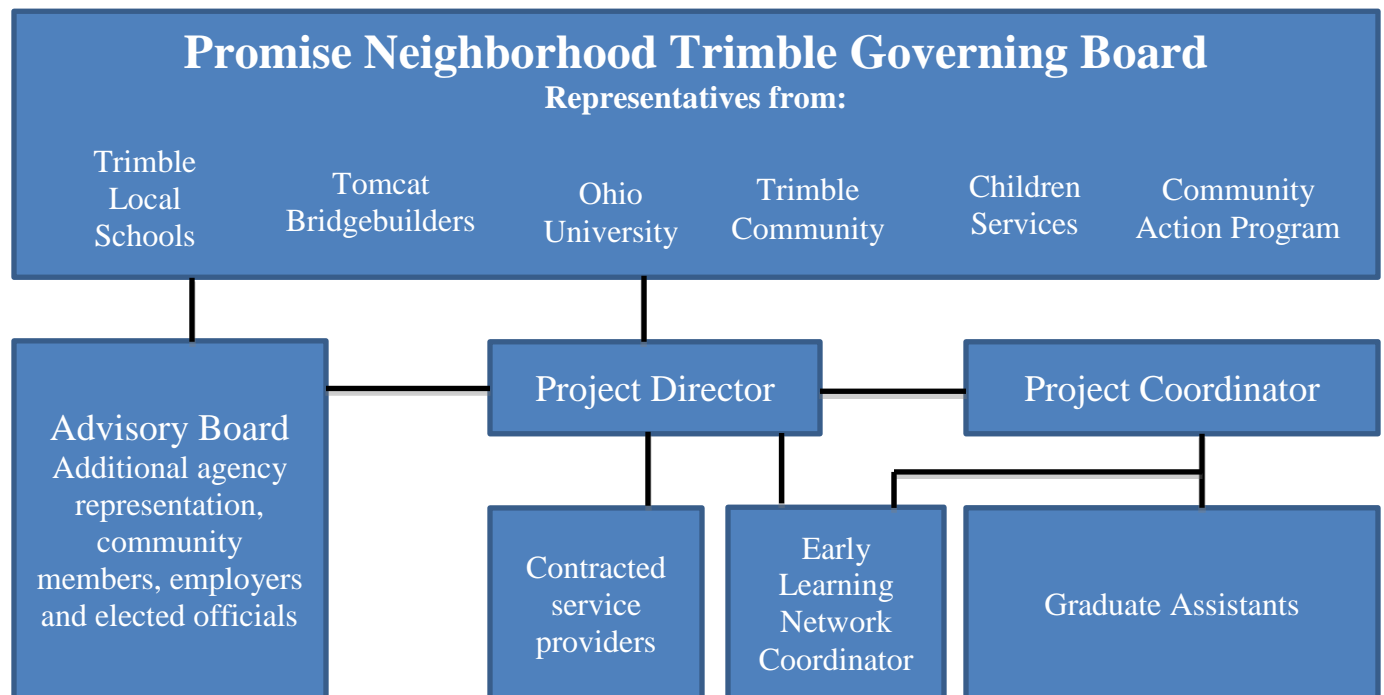
The Graduate Assistants that will be recruited upon successful award of this proposal will have excellent research skills – especially literature reviews – have good verbal and writing skills, be personable, approachable and have empathy for the Appalachian culture that is dominant in Trimble Township.

Working with the Neighborhood and its Residents

Oversight of the Promise Neighborhood Trimble project will be accomplished by having a governing board made up of community members and representatives of Trimble Local Schools, Tomcat Bridgebuilders (a local prevention-oriented group supported by the alcohol, drug, mental health services board), Athens County Children's Services, Athens County Department of Job and Family Services and Ohio University's College of Health Sciences and Professions, Patton College of Education and Human Services, Community Health Programs, and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. The Governing Board will meet monthly. The responsibility of the Governing Board is to see that the timeline and benchmarks are met by the project and to determine if the project is building sufficient support within the community. The ultimate responsibility of the Governing Board is to be the body that endorses

the implementation plan that is the result of the year-long planning phase. The Governing Board is informed through regular communications by the Project Director and the Project Coordinator. Although the Governing Board is comprised of representatives from multiple agencies and the community, the Trimble Local School District will have a distinct role that is somewhat different from the others. The school is the central focus of the project since the main purpose is to “significantly improve educational and developmental outcomes for children and youth in the community.” It is easy for service agencies with jurisdiction over counties or regions to fall into the mode of providing services to an area, especially if their offices are located elsewhere. The desired mode is that Trimble Local Schools are the center of a project with the community and the service agencies are providing needed resources to ensure success. Promise Neighborhood Trimble will put the school in the center of all decisions.

Figure 2: Project Management Structure



The Governing Board will make quarterly presentations to the Promise Neighborhood Trimble Advisory Board that is made up of an additional ten agencies and includes elected officials from the three incorporated villages within Trimble Township. The responsibility of the Advisory Board is to gather information about the project and to advise the Governing Board about the general direction of the project. The Governing Board may ask for input from the Advisory Board about specific issues related to agency services or community response.

Data Management Plan

Collecting Data

The ultimate focus of the planning year is to construct a plan that has a comprehensive set of solutions for a seamless continuum of services. The strategy to find the gaps in current services is to conduct an extensive needs assessment within the community and schools that specifically contains a gap analysis. The needs assessment was discussed in Section C of this proposal. The needs assessment will be a snapshot of the community early in the planning phase to inform the leadership team regarding the extent of services needed for targeted solutions to be applied. Data collection will continue throughout the life of the planning grant and will be used for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement and accountability.

Data collection will follow a mixed-methods approach that will include surveys/questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation and gathering from existing data sources. The advantage to using mixed methods is that it provides complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses (Johnson & Christenson 2012). A fuller picture of community issues and their components will be achieved through a thoughtful mixing of different methods of data collection. Examples of the strengths of the mixed-methods approach include: a survey finding can be explored more deeply through an open-ended interview to find out community

members' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivation and feelings about the topic. Or, quantitative findings from a community survey can be compared to larger existing data sets, such as census data, to determine if there is significance to the difference between the Trimble community and other communities, Athens County, Ohio or the nation.

Analyzing data

Data will be analyzed in the manner that is most appropriate to its type. Quantitative data will be analyzed through descriptive statistics. The essential characteristics of the data will be communicated by arranging the data into interpretable forms such as averages, ranks, proportions, etc. Graphic representations of the data will be applied when presenting the data in a report or a presentation so that the meaning of the data is made clear to the audience. A first level analysis of qualitative data will be through summarizing the responses to qualitative questions for programmatic use. A second level analysis will be done by coding the responses and finding themes that emerge through grouping the coded data together and then describing the themes. A third level of qualitative analysis will occur through a systematic and iterative data collection on a specific topic using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and grounded theory.

Using data:

For decision-making. The key responsibility of the project leaders is to determine a fit between planned solutions and the results they are intended to support. Since the solutions will not be implemented in an official manner during the planning year, the data collected will be either "as projected" or will be on current services that are very similar to the desired solutions. For example, *mentoring and counseling services* is a tentative solution to improve the efficacy of middle school students (as mentioned previously) to help them to make a successful middle

school to high school transition. To determine if this activity, which would be new to the schools, is a solution that middle school students – and their parents – think will help them transition successfully, significant amounts of data need to be collected from interviews, surveys and observation. As a second example, the availability and access to healthy foods is currently provided as a solution to child health. Data will need to be gathered to determine if the availability and access is increased, will there be a subsequent increase in healthy consumption leading to better nutrition, or will students ignore the food due to lack of motivation and turn to less nutritious food instead.

For learning. Data will be gathered in a systematic fashion that follows a plan driven by research questions. The project leadership team will first determine what it wants to know and how that information will be used. Then it will design the best strategy to gather the data in an efficient manner that is least intrusive to the schools or the community. The research questions will focus on the results as listed in the Promise Neighborhood Request for Proposals. The learning that will occur from the analysis of the data will be about the connection between the proposed solution, the related indicator and whether or not it is likely the result will be impacted by the solution.

Other learning that will occur will be about whether the chosen processes work within the school and the community. The overall intent is to change the factors that are perceived as negative and to strengthen the factors that are perceived as positive. The leadership team will learn about the best approach to gathering data in Trimble and whom the appropriate people are to involve. Working within the community gathering information will almost certainly uncover myths about the community that have been promoted as truths as well as truths about the community that were previously unknown.

For continuous improvement. Trimble Township is made up of three small villages surrounded by a rough terrain of hills and valleys where families often survive in sub-standard housing – meaning trailers, converted buses and campers and sometimes fairly primitive cabins (shacks). The county social service network is familiar with these living conditions as they attempt to meet specific family needs. Involving the community in the data gathering process will help inform not only the leadership team but also the social service network about ways to get information from community members and to get information to them as to the services they are eligible to receive.

For accountability. The data gathering that happens as a result of this project will be the best snapshot of Trimble Township and will show strengths and challenges. The first set of data collected will act as a baseline for future data. As data are collected repeatedly, any change will show movement in positive or negative directions. When movement shows a desired change, those who provide community support in that area should be commended and encouraged. When movement shows a change away from the desired level, those who provide community support in that area can get together with the leadership team to develop strategies to change activities or to provide different activities.

Partnerships

The key to achieving successful change in the lives of at-risk children in Trimble Township is the strength and full integration of the collaborations among the various partner organizations that will contribute to the Promise Neighborhood. The partner organizations included in the Memorandum of Understanding represent a unique combination of resources; both locally and regionally. Each brings an important area of expertise or source of support to the endeavor.

Core partner entities participating in the Promise Neighborhood endeavor include Ohio University, Trimble Local Schools, Tomcat Bridgebuilders, and Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program. Their work will be supplemented by the committed involvement of various other community agencies and organizations.

Ohio University, a comprehensive public University located in Athens, Ohio; approximately 15 miles from Trimble Township, will serve as a lead partner through the involvement of four of its units:

- The College of Health Sciences and Professions will provide coordinating oversight of the University's participants, will serve as an organizational home for the Promise Neighborhood Health and Well-Being Coordinator, and will provide direct local program involvement through its Kids on Campus program which operates afterschool and summer programs for elementary-aged children in the community. The College is also well-positioned in the region to provide a range of health services and assessment of health services and outcomes through its Appalachian Rural Health Institute, an organization focused on community-based health assessment and outcome research.
- The Voinovich School for Leadership and Public Affairs will serve as organizational home of the Project Director, Project Coordinator and will lead the needs assessment, data collection, analysis, and evaluation effort for the project through the involvement of their staff of evaluation and community research experts. The Voinovich School is a leader in the State of Ohio in providing community-based research to inform public decision-making and public policy.

- The Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine provides a range of community health and health education activities to communities throughout southeastern Ohio and offers expertise in assessment of health outcomes.
- The Edward Stevens Literacy Center, located in the Patton College of Education and Human Services, will provide support in assessment of and planning for literacy efforts across the cradle-to-college-to-career continuum.

Trimble Local Schools is the only local education provider for children in Trimble Township. Because of extensive community identification with and pride in the schools, the school district represents a key partner in the Promise Neighborhood effort. Because Trimble is the poorest school district in the State of Ohio, its leadership has a long history of developing innovative approaches to enhancing student achievement and well-being. As is the case in many rural areas, the school district stands as a primary organizing structure for the community and, as such, is well positioned to facilitate a network of relationships among various support structures in the community. Unfortunately, as a by-product of its status as a district in a high-poverty rural area with a small tax base, the district often lacks the resources to assertively address barriers to student success.

Trimble Schools' involvement in the planning and implementation phases of the project will include provision of data and data collection opportunities, an avenue to promote contact and involvement with families of children, and a primary promoter of interagency relationships in the local community and Athens County.

Tomcat Bridgebuilders is a community resource and advocacy agency led by residents of Trimble Township. Bridgebuilders conduct assessments of various health and well-being factors in the community and implement various programs to enhance well-being in the

community. It represents a strong local presence that will provide key leadership to the Promise Neighborhood planning effort and that will facilitate communication and connections with key constituent groups in the community.

Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAP-CAP) mobilizes resources to empower individuals and communities through advocacy and quality services that promote self-sufficiency and improved quality of life. Strategies to accomplish this mission include: development and operation of program services that address early education needs of children, employment and training needs for self-sufficiency, safe and affordable housing for low and moderate income residents, food and nutrition needs of residents of all ages, and development activities that improve community infrastructure.

Ensuring Accountability between Formal and Informal Partners

The plan for accountability between formal and informal partners can be described while examining the project management structure (See Figure 2). Basic accountability measures include the expectation of Governing Board and Advisory Board members to attend each of the set meetings. Attendance at such meetings ensures the given agency or representative is providing the promised amount of match. Procedurally, following each meeting, minutes will be communicated to those in the management structure.

Further accountability measures have been built into the management structure. The representatives of the Governing Board will be accountable for overseeing the project director and project coordinator, holding them to their described responsibilities. The project director has the authority to evaluate the project coordinator as well as having oversight for the contracted service providers. The project coordinator will oversee the efforts of the graduate assistants. Both the project director and coordinator will oversee the efforts of the early learning network

coordinator. Finally, the Advisory Board will be responsible for assessing the appropriateness of the activities being planned and carried out in the Trimble Township community. This structure of accountability will help to ensure the quality of performance is acceptable and each partner, both formal and informal, are fulfilling the responsibilities in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.

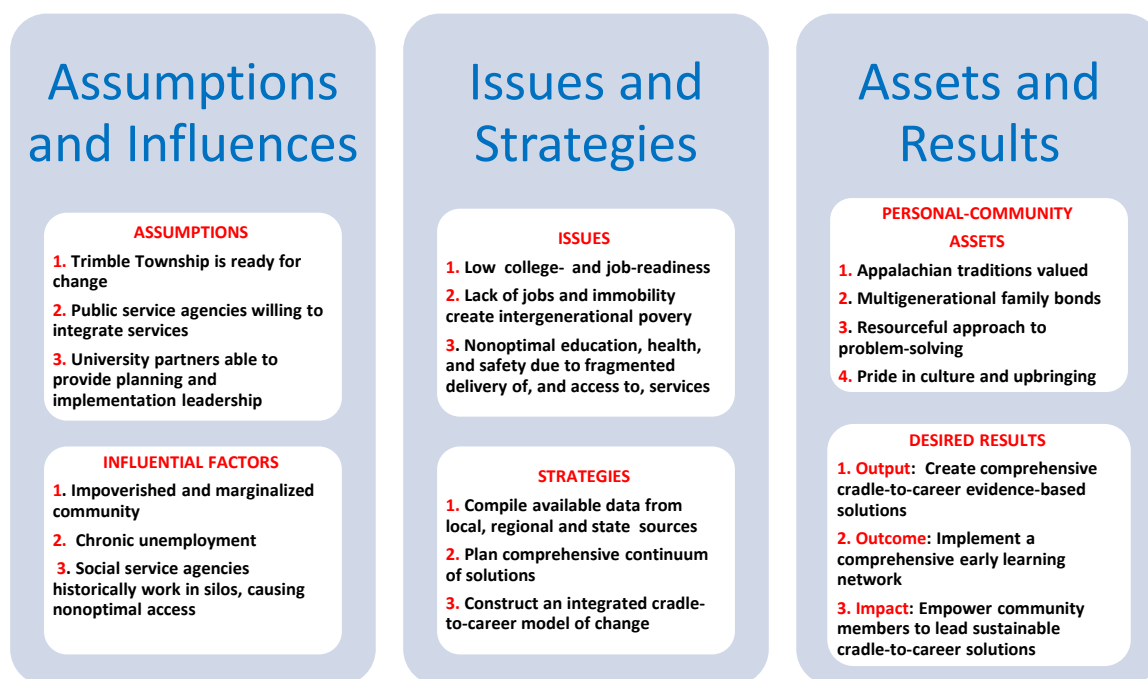
Theory of Change

The Trimble Promise Neighborhood model reflects a theory of change and theory of action, both of which are dependent on and nested within a solid foundation of strong and healthy family and community values, aptitudes, and structures, and embraced by each of the various partner organizations. Our *theory of action* (see Figure 1) is that the achievement of healthy development of at-risk children requires *integration* of services centered around the school, and timely, strategic, targeted *intervention* using a cradle-to-career continuum of evidence-based solutions.

Our *theory of change* (see Figure 3) reflects the belief that assumptions and influences determine issues and strategies that lead to harnessing assets and achieving meaningful results. This theory builds on three key assumptions. First, we assume Trimble Township is ready for change. This is evident in the calls of numerous individuals in the community for improvements that will lead to better outcomes for children and the high level of involvement of local residents in the Promise Neighborhood planning effort. Second, we assume that public service agencies are willing to share data and services. Again, this is evident in the degree to which the various partner agencies have come to the table around the Promise Neighborhood planning effort. Finally, we assume that Ohio University is uniquely situated to provide analysis and planning support not available in many communities.

The data discussed earlier indicate that Trimble Township is a marginalized community with high levels of poverty and unemployment. The assistance that is presently available is typically offered in a “siloed” way by multiple agencies that seldom collaborate or communicate across organizational structures. Each of these factors is highly influential in contributing to negative outcomes among Trimble Township youth.

Figure 3: Promise Neighborhood Trimble Theory of Change



Of particular concern are three issues that result from the assumptions and influences just described. Each of these will be directly addressed through Promise Neighborhood programming. The data presently available suggest that low readiness for post-secondary education and jobs contribute to a lack of adequate outcomes. This lack of college- and job-readiness is magnified by a lack of jobs in the community and the resultant demand for out-mobility as youth reach adulthood. Finally, the community reflects a pattern of fragmented service delivery that contributes to non-optimal educational, health, and safety outcomes.

In order to affect change in relation to these issues, the Promise Neighborhood planning team will a) compile available data from local and regional sources, b) add to the repository of data available to inform planning, c) plan a comprehensive continuum of solutions, and d) construct an integrated cradle-to-career model of outcomes to be achieved.

Our theory of change reflects the belief that meaningful and sustainable change will be realized in the lives of Trimble's children when the community at-large participates in the cradle-to-career solutions that we've outlined in the present proposal. The major personal and community assets that position our Promise Neighborhoods Trimble proposal for success include: the high value the community places on Appalachian traditions; the strong multigenerational bonds within and between families; the resourceful approach by leaders and citizens to problem-solving; and, the pride of Trimble citizens in their culture, community, and upbringing.

Along with these assets, change should reflect key outputs, outcomes, and impacts that are both comprehensive and measurable. We believe that desirable change should be reflected in the development of a set of comprehensive cradle-to-career evidence-based services, the implementation of a comprehensive early learning network, and the empowerment of community leaders to lead solutions in their community.

The project design lays out the theory of action as well as the context in which the action will take place. The Family and Community Support Network, which crosswalks with the related indicators in the solution table (See Tables 1 and 2), displays the range of solutions to which our focus will be directed. At the center of the support network is the Trimble Local School District. By empowering local families and the community to support the district the most appropriate solutions can be identified, planned for and ultimately implemented. It is our belief that a range

of solutions that encompasses each of the dimensions reflected in Figure 1 is most likely to result in desired outcomes across the cradle-to-career continuum. Tables 1 and 2 describe these milestones, related indicators and tentative solutions in greater detail.

Integrated Funding Streams

This proposal includes several descriptions of how multiple public sources voluntarily provided funding resources to Trimble Township. This is evident in the Athens County Children Services funding a school social worker whose office is physically located at Trimble Elementary School. Tri-County Mental Health and Counseling Services provides counselors to work on site. OU's Patton College of Education and Human Services provides tutors, faculty-led courses and full-time Teaching Fellows. Organizations such as Tomcat Bridgebuilders provide funding to pay for buses to take students home from after-school activities – a much-needed service in a rural area.

There are very few private resources for the school to turn to due to the nature of the impoverished area. This project will raise the level of awareness of the need of the school as well as the willingness of the school district to work with private entities according to their needs and desires. If a particular private entity has a need for potential workers to have certain skills, the school district will certainly listen and work with the entity to see where in the adopted curriculum those skills are described.